



How to be a real man



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful





Assalamu'alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuhu,

We pray that this message reaches you
in good health and imaan.

On behalf of our AMAU Academy team, we would like
to present to you these compiled notes that we have
prepared to make your journey with us a lot easier.

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If you find any errors or corrections that need
to be made, kindly inform us via our email
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May Allah make our paths toward seeking
beneficial knowledge easy and kindle our hearts
with sincerity and gratefulness
towards Him.

Jazakumullahu Khayran



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Glossary



جل جلاله | Jalla Jalāluhu
Allah the Most Exalted



صلى الله عليه وسلم | Sallāllāhu Alayhi Wa Sallam
Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him



عليه السلام | Alayhis salaam
Peace be upon him



رضي الله عنه | RadiAllahu `anhu
May Allah be pleased with him



رضي الله عنها | RadiAllahu `anha
May Allah be pleased with her

Introduction

Chapter One

This is a topic that has its roots in the science of Adab - manners, etiquettes and behaviour. I believe there is a pressing need to discuss manhood and masculinity in the light of Islam.

Firstly, from the wisdom of Allāh ﷻ is that he created human beings as male and female. Allāh ﷻ told us in the Qur'ān:

1

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۚ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ﴾

“O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female, and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allāh is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allāh is all-Knowing and all-Acquainted.”

Surah Al-Hujurat: 13

2

﴿فَلَمَّا وَضَعَتْهَا قَالَتْ رَبِّ إِنِّي وَضَعْتُهَا أُنْثَىٰ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا وَضَعْتَ وَلَيْسَ الذَّكَرُ كَالْأُنْثَىٰ﴾

“But when she delivered her, she said: My Lord, I have delivered a female. And Allāh was most knowing of what she delivered - and the male is not like the female.”

Surah Āl-'Imrān: 36

Secondly, Islam came to perfect our manners and behaviour - male and female.

It has been narrated in the Musnad of Imām Ahmad on the authority of the noble companion Abī Hurayrah رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

3

“إِنَّمَا بَعَثْتُ لِأَتَمِّمَ صَالِحَ الْأَخْلَاقِ”

“I was only sent to perfect righteous manners.”

Musnad Ahmad

According to the wording of al-Bazzār:

4

“إِنَّمَا بَعَثْتُ لِأَتَمِّمَ مَكَارِمَ الْأَخْلَاقِ”

“I was only sent to perfect noble manners.”

Al-Bazzār

A significant part of this is developing our character and behaviour as Allāh commanded us. Whilst it is definitely possible to speak about this in a general way that encompasses both men and women, it is also beneficial to look at the way that a man should apply and implement this, bearing in mind those things that are unique and specific to him.

It's not that we will be talking about a whole different set of behaviours and manners, because the Prophet ﷺ said in the ḥadīth of 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها :

5

“إِنَّمَا النِّسَاءُ شَقَائِقُ الرِّجَالِ”

“Women are nothing but the full sisters of men”

Sunan Abī Dāwūd

Rather, for the purpose of this course, we want to look at these characteristics and manners in the light of a man. This is for a number of reasons, including:

- 1 There is a huge war being waged against gender, to the point where the concept of masculinity is seen as something extremely negative, and something to be erased. This is one extreme.
- 2 On the other hand, our young men are exposed to a hyper-masculine culture which encompasses gang culture, extreme violence, pornography, and even 'macho' movie characters. These two extremes fuel the other, with some young men becoming women, and others becoming abusers of women. This cycle causes loss of true masculinity - the characteristics of a real man which are portrayed in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah.
- 3 The breakdown of the family means that we have a lot of young men that don't have a father figure who is able to pass down the manners and behaviour that a young man should aspire to. I don't just mean divorce, even the prevalence of absent fathers, who are too busy to give this essential tarbiyyah to their children, not to mention the culture of outsourcing our children's tarbiyyah to the TV or YouTube.
- 4 Even without practising Islām, many of these characteristics were traditionally passed on within the culture of the Arabs. Islām perfected these manners and refined them, removing the evil from them and preserving and perfecting what was good. This can be seen from the poetry of pre-Islamic times, and we are going to try to give some examples within the course. However, the culture of both Arabs and non-Arabs has changed significantly, and even a great deal of the natural (or fiṭrī) characteristics of a man have been lost, or are in danger of being lost.
- 5 The loss of knowledge and increase in ignorance has also harmed masculinity. This means a return to the evils of pre-Islamic times, and a loss of the wasaṭiyyah - the balance and the middle path of Islām. One of the side effects of a loss of knowledge is also that another major source of acquiring manners and character has also been largely lost - the student who learns manners from their teacher.

Take, as an example, the statement of al-Imām Mālik:

"كَانَتْ أُمِّي تُعَمِّمُنِي، وَتَقُولُ لِي : اذْهَبْ إِلَى رَبِيعَةَ -
تَعْنِي ابْنُ أَبِي عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ فَقِيهَ أَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ فِي زَمَنِهِ - فَتَعَلَّمْ مِنْ أَدَبِهِ قَبْلَ عِلْمِهِ"
"My mother used to put on my turban and say to me, 'Go to Rabee'ah
(i.e., Ibn 'Abdur-Raḥman, the great scholar of fiqh among the people
of Madīnah at his time) and learn from his etiquettes before
you learn from his knowledge"

- 6 In developing character, manners, and behaviour, people need role models. If the father is not a role model, and the teacher is not a role model, and the person does not have the knowledge to know the role models from the seerah and the biographies of the salaf, what are we left with? Hollywood, social media influencers, musicians and rappers, friends who are influenced by more of the same? This does nothing but fuel the two extremes that I mentioned earlier, and this serves to weaken Islām.
- 7 Manners are needed before knowledge, as they are the means to acquire knowledge.

Makhlad ibn al-Ḥusayn said to Ibn-ul-Mubārak one day:

"نَحْنُ إِلَى كَثِيرٍ مِنَ الْأَدَبِ أَحْوَجُ مِنَّا إِلَى كَثِيرٍ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ"
"We are more in need of a great deal of manners
than a great deal of knowledge"

That is because manners are the key to acquiring knowledge. So, it's not that we need lots and lots of knowledge, but we really need to have the manners that stem from knowledge.

Nothing Takes a Real Man Away From His Religion

Chapter Two

In this course, we are going to mention the characteristics, along with evidences from the Qur’ān, the Sunnah, and the statements of the salaf. We are also going to show that many of these characteristics were also praised in pre-Islamic times, but that Islam refined them and taught us them at the highest standard. We are also going to look at the dangers to these most excellent characteristics from outside of Islām, from both extremes.

Our example in this is the example of the best of men, our messenger Muhammad ﷺ, about whom Allāh said:

1

﴿وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ﴾

“And you are indeed upon a great standard of character.”

Surah Al-Qalam: 4

2

﴿لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا﴾

“There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allāh an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allāh and the Last Day, and remembers Allāh often.”

Surah Al-Ahzāb: 21

As well as the other prophets who were the best example of men, as Allāh described them in the Qur’ān:

3

﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ إِلَّا رِجَالًا نُّوحِي إِلَيْهِمْ ۖ فَاسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ﴾

“And We sent not before you, except men to whom We revealed, so ask the people of the message if you do not know.”

Surah Al-Anbiyā: 7

These men deserved the title *rijaal* - because they were real men.

PAUSE & THINK: *I want you to write down your own ideas now. What do you think makes a real man?*

So let's start our journey of discovery: how to be a real man!

1

Nothing takes a real man away from his religion

4

﴿فِي بُيُوتٍ أُذِنَ لِلَّهِ أَنْ تُرْفَعَ وَيُذْكَرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ فِيهَا بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ * رِجَالٌ لَا تُلْهِيهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ ۖ يَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ الْقُلُوبُ وَالْأَبْصَارُ﴾

“In mosques which Allāh has ordered to be raised, and that His name be mentioned therein; exalting His perfection within them in the morning and the evenings. Men whom neither commerce nor sale distracts from the remembrance of Allāh and performance of prayer and giving of zakāh. They fear a day in which the hearts and eyes will [fearfully] turn about.”

Surah An-Nūr: 37

They are men, and they have their desires like all men do. Allāh mentioned those desires in detail:

5

﴿زَيْنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ وَالْخَرْثِ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الْمَآبِ﴾

“Beautified for people is the love of that which they desire - of women and sons, heaped-up sums of gold and silver, fine branded horses, and cattle and tilled land. That is the enjoyment of worldly life, but Allāh has with Him the best return.”

Surah Āl-‘Imrān: 14

But these are real men, because none of these desires stop them from their prayer and their zakāh.

For that reason, our mother ‘Ā’ishah narrated ﷺ :

6

"كَانَ فِي مِهْنَةِ أَهْلِهِ، فَإِذَا حَضَرَتِ الصَّلَاةُ قَامَ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ"

“He was in the service of his family, and when the time for prayer came, he would stand and go to pray.”

Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī

For this reason also, the Prophet ﷺ said about the kind of man that you should marry your daughter to:

7

"إِذَا خُطِبَ إِلَيْكُمْ مَنْ تَرْضَوْنَ دِينَهُ وَخُلُقَهُ فَرَوِّجُوهُ"

“When someone whose religion and character you are pleased with proposes to [someone under your care], then marry her to him.”

Al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, and others – and the ḥadīth has some weakness in it

Abū Hurayrah رضى الله عنه said:

8

"قِيلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَنْ أَكْرَمُ النَّاسِ قَالَ: أَتَقَّاهُمْ. قَالُوا لَيْسَ عَنْ هَذَا نَسْأَلُكَ. قَالَ: فَيُوسُفُ نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ ابْنُ نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ ابْنِ خَلِيلِ اللَّهِ. قَالُوا لَيْسَ عَنْ هَذَا نَسْأَلُكَ. قَالَ: فَعَنْ مَعَادِنِ الْعَرَبِ تَسْأَلُونِي خِيَارُهُمْ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ خِيَارُهُمْ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ إِذَا فَقَّهُوا"

“It was said to Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) as to who was the most worthy of respect amongst people. He said: The most God-conscious amongst you They said: It is not this that we are asking about, whereupon he said: Then he is Yusuf, the Apostle of Allāh and the son of Allāh's Apostle, Ya'qub, who was also the son of Allāh's Apostle, the friend of Allāh [Ibrahim] They said: This is not what we are asking you. He said: You mean the tribes of Arabia? Those who are good in pre-Islamic days are good in Islam [after embracing Islam] when they get an understanding of it.”

Al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, and others – and the ḥadīth has some weakness in it

All of these attributes of manlihood and masculinity that were so prized by the Arabs are also prized in Islam, however, only when they come with the understanding of the religion – from a person of religion. This is why the first point to be mentioned is the religion. The first point is not strength, bravery, courage or generosity. Despite all of these being amazing qualities of real men, they are only beneficial when the knowledge of the religion come along with these characteristics. This is why this is the first point.

Determination and Reliance Upon Allāh Alone

Chapter Three

These two are mentioned together because they must be brought in balance.

Allāh described the greatest of the prophets as being people of determination:

1 ﴿فَاصْبِرْ كَمَا صَبَرَ أُولُو الْعَزْمِ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ﴾

“So be patient, as were those of determination among the messengers”

Surah Al-Aḥqāf: 45

They were five, in order of Time, Nūh, ‘Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, ‘Isā, and Muhammad ﷺ. They were Ulul ‘Azm - the five men of determination. This shows that having determination and being resolute is – without doubt – a characteristic of a real man, as it is a quality that distinguished the five best men who have ever lived on this earth.

The poet said:

لِكُلِّ إِلَى شَأْوِ الْعُلَا حَرَكَاتٌ ... وَلَكِنْ عَزِيزٌ فِي الرِّجَالِ ثَبَاتٌ

For everyone, to ambitions of highness, there is movement

...

but rare among men is firm resolve

The poet is saying that all men have ambitions of highness and visions of grandeur, however, rare among men is to find someone that has thabāt – the determination and resolve to achieve their ambitions. If one wants to be a real man, they have to possess the resolve to put these ambitions into actions.

But Allāh also showed us that determination on its own is of no value without complete reliance upon Allāh:

2 ﴿فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ ۚ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ ۚ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ ۚ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ﴾

“So by mercy from Allāh, you were lenient with them. And if you had been harsh and hard-hearted, they would have disbanded from about you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult them in the matter. And when you have decided, then rely upon Allāh. Indeed, Allāh loves those who rely [upon Him].”

Surah Āl-‘Imrān: 159

In this verse, Allāh informs us that when we have made our decision we should be firm and resolved. Then one should place their reliance upon Allāh. Therefore, resolve without reliance upon Allāh is of no value and fake reliance upon Allāh with no determination and commitment is of no value. Value is when a real man is determined regarding a decision but realises that they cannot achieve anything without Allāh. This is what connects these two characteristics together. ***This is what Islām commanded and what makes you a real man.***

Independence



Chapter Four

This leads us to the topic of independence. This doesn't mean that a real man doesn't seek advice. Rather, the Prophet ﷺ was told to seek the counsel of his companions in the previous aayah, and in the treaty of Ḥudaybiyah, he sought the advice of his wife, Umm Salamah, and she advised him to go out without speaking a word, to slaughter his sacrificial animal and shave his head, and he did so.

Rather, true independence is that a real man listens to advice and counsel, and then makes his own decision - others don't make that decision for him, and he is not unduly influenced by the different voices around him. In these days, the sad thing is seeing men who cannot make a decision - instead others make it for them - or when they make a decision they go back and forward, changing their mind with every blow of the wind.

The Prophet ﷺ used to make the following du'ā:



"اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الثَّبَاتَ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَالْعَزِيمَةَ عَلَى الرُّشْدِ وَأَسْأَلُكَ شُكْرَ نِعْمَتِكَ وَحُسْنَ عِبَادَتِكَ وَأَسْأَلُكَ قَلْبًا سَلِيمًا وَلِسَانًا صَادِقًا وَأَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ خَيْرِ مَا تَعْلَمُ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا تَعْلَمُ وَأَسْتَغْفِرُكَ لِمَا تَعْلَمُ"

“O Allāh, I ask You for steadfastness in all my affairs and determination in following the right path, I ask You to make me thankful for Your blessings and to make me worship You properly. I ask You for a sound heart and a truthful tongue. I ask You for the best of what You know and I seek refuge in You from the worst of what You know and I seek Your forgiveness for what You know.”

Al-Nasā'ī, al-Tirmidhī and others

Think of Abū Bakr with the army of Usāmah ibn Zayd, or with the decision to fight those who refused the zakaah. He was virtually alone in his decision, he listened to advice, but he made his own decision - and the companions later came to agreement that he was right.

Usāmah ibn Zayd was a young man – an amazing example of masculinity – as a teenager he was given the role to lead the first army sent out after the death of the Prophet ﷺ. As a young man he would be commanding older people. This is because he had the qualities of masculinity.

Also, let us look at the decision of Abū Bakr to send Usāmah ibn Zayd; the Prophet ﷺ sent out the army of Usāmah ibn Zayd and that is what exactly what Abū Bakr did.

Abū Bakr had to face people who refused to give a hand; those who were claiming that it is not the time to fight and that these people should be left alone. However, Abū Bakr made his famous statement, that if one of them prevents me from a rope that they would tie the camel with which they used to give to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ then I will fight them for it.

The poet al-Muntanbbī has some wonderful lines of poetry in which he says:

عَلَى قَدْرِ أَهْلِ الْعَزْمِ تَأْتِي الْعَزَائِمُ وَتَأْتِي عَلَى قَدْرِ الْكِرَامِ الْمَكَارِمُ
وَتَعْظُمُ فِي عَيْنِ الصَّغِيرِ صِغَارُهَا وَتَصْغُرُ فِي عَيْنِ الْعَظِيمِ الْعَظَائِمُ

According to the measure of people's determination do resolutions come
...
and according to nobility do noble deeds arrive;

Insignificant matters seem immense in the eyes of minors
...
and great matters seem small in the eyes of the greats.

High Aspirations



Chapter Five

The previous two characteristics, determination and independence, need a third - high aspirations.

Ibn al-Qayyim said:

1

"إِذَا طَلَعَ نَجْمُ الْهِمَّةِ فِي ظَلَامِ لَيْلِ الْبَطَالَةِ، وَرَدَفَهُ قَمَرُ الْعَزِيمَةِ، أَشْرَقَتِ الْأَرْضُ
بِنُورِ رَبِّهَا"

"If the star of aspiration rises in the darkness of the night of idleness, and this is combined with the moon of dedication, the earth will be lit up with the light of its Lord."

Aspiration and dedication are the two characteristics which were mentioned. The star of aspiration – as it is high in the sky, along with dedication, hard work and commitment. When these couple then the earth will be lit up with the light of its Lord.

The Prophet ﷺ indicated this in a ḥadeeth narrated in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī from Abū Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ :

2

"فَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُ اللَّهَ فَسَلُّوهُ الْفِرْدَوْسَ، فَإِنَّهُ أَوْسَطُ الْجَنَّةِ وَأَعْلَى الْجَنَّةِ، وَفَوْقَهُ
عَرْشُ الرَّحْمَنِ، وَمِنْهُ تَفْجَرُ أَنْهَارُ الْجَنَّةِ"

"So if you ask Allāh for anything, ask Him for al-Firdaws, for it is the best part of Paradise and the highest part of Paradise, and at its top there is the throne of the Most Merciful, and from it gush forth the rivers of Paradise."

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī

Perhaps we can summarise what we have learnt so far with the wonderful ḥadeeth of Abū Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

3

"الْمُؤْمِنُ الْقَوِيُّ خَيْرٌ وَأَحَبُّ إِلَى اللَّهِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِ الضَّعِيفِ وَفِي كُلِّ خَيْرٍ آخِرُ
عَلَى مَا يَنْفَعُكَ وَاسْتَعِنْ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْجِزْ وَإِنْ أَصَابَكَ شَيْءٌ فَلَا تَقُلْ لَوْ أَنِّي فَعَلْتُ
كَانَ كَذَا وَكَذَا . وَلَكِنْ قُلْ قَدَرُ اللَّهِ وَمَا شَاءَ فَعَلَ فَإِنَّ لَوْ تَفْتَحُ عَمَلَ الشَّيْطَانِ"

"A strong believer is better and is more beloved to Allāh than a weak believer, and there is good in both. Be keen for that which gives you benefit and seek help from Allāh and do not lose heart. If anything afflicts you, don't say, 'If I had not done that, it would not have happened', but say, 'It was the decree of Allāh and He does what He wills.' For, saying 'if only' opens the door to the actions of the devil."

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim

In reality, this is a summary of all the previous point that we have mentioned. 'Strive to that which benefits you' – a real man is always looking for opportunities to grow in the hereafter and in this world. Along with the keenness, they are aware that they need to seek the help of Allāh and place their trust in Him. They also ever feel helpless and defeated.

From this we can add another characteristic, and that is having firm resolve and not losing heart if you fail in something. Every failure is an opportunity from Allāh, from His wise and merciful decree. This is real strength (and we will come to that later, in shā' Allāh).

One of the great dangers to determination and high aspirations in our time is laziness and procrastination. One of the cures for this is the following du‘ā - rather this du‘ā is a cure for almost every problem that a man could ever have:

4

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْهَمِّ وَالْحَزَنِ، وَالْعَجْزِ وَالْكَسَلِ، وَالْجُبْنِ وَالْبُخْلِ، وَضَلَعِ الدَّيْنِ، وَغَلَبَةِ الرِّجَالِ"

“O Allāh! I seek refuge with You from worry and grief, from helplessness and laziness, from cowardice and stinginess, from being heavily in debt and from being overpowered by men.”
Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī

Responsibility and Leadership

Chapter Six

A real man recognises that he is responsible for himself and for others around him.

The Prophet ﷺ said, as narrated by ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar ؓ :

- 1 "أَلَا كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ فَالْأَمِيرُ الَّذِي عَلَى النَّاسِ رَاعٍ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ وَالرَّجُلُ رَاعٍ عَلَى أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْهُمْ..."
“Indeed, every one of you is a shepherd and everyone is answerable with regard to his flock. The ruler is a shepherd over the people and will be questioned about his subjects. A man is a guardian over the members of his family and will be questioned about them...”

Al-Bukhārī and Muslim

A real man has to feel a sense of responsibility for his family as he will be questioned regarding them. When one has this sense of responsibility then they rise up to the challenge. This also shows that one should have the quality of leadership; like a shepherd for the people.

Allāh created a man with the traits necessary to handle this responsibility - since Allāh does not burden a person with more than they can bear.

- 2 ﴿لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا﴾
“Allāh does not burden a soul except [with that within] its capacity.”

Surah Al-Baqarah: 286

- 3 ﴿الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ﴾
“Men are in charge of women by what Allāh has given one over the other and what they spend from their wealth.”

Surah Al-Nisā’: 34

Allāh has given the man this responsibility because of what Allāh has given the man – from His grace – to make him suited for this responsibility due to what he spends from his wealth. Therefore, ultimately it is Allāh that has given this leadership and authority to a man, then it is upon the man to stand up and fulfil it as Allāh commanded for it to be fulfilled.

There are some extremes that we need to be aware of. Some people shy away from their responsibility; they do not want to be responsible and they will say that everyone is responsible for themselves. On the contrary, there are those who abuse their responsibility and utilise it to hurt the women under their care or to harm children under their responsibility – similar to a tyrant over his people. This is not what a real man does. A real man recognises the blessing of Allāh who has given him certain characteristics which makes him suitable for this position of responsibility, authority and leadership.

People should be able to look to a real man for leadership - not only the members of his family and those that he is responsible for, but even other men. This doesn't mean that he craves leadership, because the Prophet ﷺ said to Abū Dharr:

4

"يَا أَبَا ذَرٍّ إِنِّي أَرَاكَ ضَعِيفًا وَإِنِّي أَحِبُّ لَكَ مَا أَحِبُّ لِنَفْسِي لَا تَأْمَرَنَّ عَلَى اثْنَيْنِ"

“O Abū Dharr, I see you to be weak, and I love for you what I love for myself, so do not rule over even two people.”

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim

However, a real man has the qualities of leadership - so that if Allāh decrees that he should have to step up to take responsibility, he is ready to do that.

Patience and Resilience in Tough Times

Chapter Seven

If a person is responsible for others, and the weight of responsibility and decision making has been placed on their shoulders, they have to be patient and resilient.

Allāh told us about the Prophet Ayyūb عليه السلام :

- 1 **﴿إِنَّا وَجَدْنَاهُ صَابِرًا ۖ نَّعْمَ الْعَبْدُ ۖ إِنَّهُ أَوَّابٌ﴾**
“Indeed, we found him to be patient; an excellent servant. Indeed, He was repeatedly turning back [in repentance].”
 Surah Şād: 44

Let us reflect over the situation of Prophet Ayyūb and everything he went through. Look at his patience and resilience in tough times. This is the kind of man that one needs to aspire to be. We need to get rid of these role models from Hollywood, rappers, musicians and gang members. The real role models are the Prophets; like Ayyūb عليه السلام :

- 2 **﴿إِنَّا وَجَدْنَاهُ صَابِرًا ۖ نَّعْمَ الْعَبْدُ ۖ إِنَّهُ أَوَّابٌ﴾**
“Indeed, we found him to be patient; an excellent servant. Indeed, He was repeatedly turning back [in repentance].”
 Surah Şād: 44

And Allāh commanded the believers:

- 3 **﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا وَرَابِطُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾**
“O you who believe, persevere and endure and remain stationed - and have taqwā of Allāh that you may be successful”
 Surah Āl-‘Imrān: 200

He commanded ṣabr, which is patience within yourself; and He commanded muṣāabirah, which is patience with others, and He commanded both of these two in muraabiṭah remaining stationed at post, waiting for the oncoming enemy.

And Luqmān advised his son, and this is one of the greatest pieces of advice relating to being a man, as Allāh told us in the Qur’ān:

- 4 **﴿يَا بُنَيَّ أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ۚ وَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَكَ ۖ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ﴾**
“O my son, establish the prayer, command that which is good, forbid that which is evil, and be patient over what befalls you. Indeed, this is from matters requiring determination”
 Surah Luqmān: 17

These are all from the matters which require determination. One has to be patient with the trials that they will face.

- 5 **﴿لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي كَبَدٍ﴾**
“Indeed, We have created humankind in ‘constant’ struggle”
 Surah Al-Balad: 4

If one wants to be in charge and have authority then they have to be able to accept the struggles which will come their way. This requires resolve and determination. This requires patience and entails controlling both speech and actions at times of difficulty, which also leads us to discuss strength.

Strength



Chapter Eight

Generally, when we talk about masculinity and manhood, the first attribute which comes to the people's mind is strength.

We have already heard the ḥadeeth of Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

1

"الْمُؤْمِنُ الْقَوِيُّ خَيْرٌ وَأَحَبُّ إِلَى اللَّهِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِ الضَّعِيفِ وَفِي كُلِّ خَيْرٍ اخِرِصْ عَلَى مَا يَنْفَعُكَ وَاسْتَعِنْ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْجِزْ وَإِنْ أَصَابَكَ شَيْءٌ فَلَا تَقُلْ لَوْ أَنِّي فَعَلْتُ كَانَ كَذَا وَكَذَا. وَلَكِنْ قُلْ قَدَرُ اللَّهِ وَمَا شَاءَ فَعَلَ فَإِنَّ لَوْ تَفْتَحُ عَمَلَ الشَّيْطَانِ"

“A strong believer is better and is more beloved to Allāh than a weak believer, and there is good in both. Be keen for that which gives you benefit and seek help from Allāh and do not lose heart. If anything afflicts you, don't say, 'If I had not done that, it would not have happened', but say, 'It was the decree of Allāh and He does what He wills.' For, saying 'if only' opens the door to the actions of the devil.”

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim

However, we need to understand this in light of the explanation of the Prophet ﷺ, in which he said:

2

"لَيْسَ الشَّدِيدُ بِالصُّرْعَةِ، إِنَّمَا الشَّدِيدُ الَّذِي يَمْلِكُ نَفْسَهُ عِنْدَ الْغَضَبِ"

“The strong one is not he who wrestles. The strong one is nothing more than the one who controls himself when angry.”

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim

This is why you see a man who is incredibly strong physically, but he is like a small child when he gets angry. One may see a man who is physically strong, but when they become angry they act like a small child; throwing tantrums and not controlling what they say. They may become angry to the extent where they divorce their wife or do not even remember what they have done. That physical strength did not really benefit them and it is a form of fake masculinity. This is a portrayed form of hyper-masculinity, but if one cannot control themselves then this is of no benefit. The powerful man is not the one who wrestles, rather it is the one who can control himself when angry.

This is something that needs to be practiced:

3

"وَمَنْ يَتَصَبَّرْ يُصَبِّرْهُ اللَّهُ"

“And whoever practises patience, Allāh will make him patient”

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī

This doesn't mean that a man should not be physically strong. We all know the examples of the likes of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and Ḥamzah ibn ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib (ﷺ) - but true strength is found in īmān and in self-control. Physical strength is an amazing quality to have, and it's something that if a person is working hard on their īmān, character, and self-control, they should also try to develop their physical strength and fitness - but physical strength without those things is worth very little.

As the narration states:



"المُؤْمِنُ الْقَوِيُّ"

“A strong believer”

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim

This shows that strength is tied to being a believer and that a disbeliever has no value. A disbeliever who may be strong has no value. Also, the strong disobedience person is of no value. The one who has value is the strong believer.

Intelligence and Wisdom

Chapter Nine

If a man is going to be responsible for those around him, and to display the qualities of leadership, he needs to be wise and intelligent.

The Prophet ﷺ indicated that this is from the characteristics of a real man when he said:

1

"وَمَا رَأَيْتُ مِنْ نَاقِصَاتٍ عَقْلٍ وَدِينٍ أَغْلَبَ لِيْذِي لُبٍّ مِنْكُمْ"

"I have not seen anyone more deficient in intellect and religion, yet overpowering a wise man, than you [women]."

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim

The understanding taken from this is that a man should not be deficient in intellect or wisdom.

Allāh said in the Qur'ān:

2

﴿يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۚ وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا ۚ وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ﴾

"He gives wisdom to whom He wills, and whoever has been given wisdom has certainly been given much good. And none will remember except those of understanding"

Surah Al-Baqarah: 269

Allāh made wisdom a fundamental characteristic of the prophets, who were the best of men:

3

﴿ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ﴾

"Call to the way of your lord with wisdom and good admonition, and argue with them in the way that is best"

Surah Al-Nahl: 125

Ibn 'Abbās ؓ said:

4

"كُونُوا رَبَّانِيْنَ حُكَمَاءَ فُقَهَاءَ"

"Be rabbaaniyyeen [scholars who nurture their students]: people of wisdom and fiqh"

Wisdom is a characteristic which stops you from doing or saying something ignorant and foolish. It is saying the right thing at the right time, and doing the right thing at the right time. It isn't weakness - but knowing when to show your strength and when to conceal it. This also requires forbearance.

Forbearance

Chapter Ten

The Prophet ﷺ said to Ashajj ‘Abdul-Qays ﷺ :

- 1
- "إِنَّ فِيكَ خَصْلَتَيْنِ يُحِبُّهُمَا اللَّهُ الْحِلْمُ وَالْأَنَاءُ"
- "Indeed, you have two characteristics that Allāh loves: forbearance and deliberation"

Al-Ḥilm is that you do not rush to seek revenge, or hold grudges against all those who have wronged you. al-Anaah is that you take things slowly and think carefully before saying or doing something. al-Ashajj was one of the leaders of his people, and this is a quality that every real man needs to have. Once again it comes from practising it, as the Prophet ﷺ said:

- 2
- "إِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ بِالتَّعَلُّمِ، وَإِنَّمَا الْحِلْمُ بِالتَّحَلُّمِ"
- "Knowledge comes from learning, and forbearance comes from practising forbearance"

A Sense of Justice and Defending the Weak



Chapter Eleven

From the attributes of a real man which relates to leadership is a sense of justice and defending the weak.

1

﴿وَلَمَّا وَرَدَ مَاءَ مَدْيَنَ وَجَدَ عَلَيْهِ أُمَّةٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ يَسْقُونَ وَوَجَدَ مِنْ دُونِهِمُ امْرَأَتَيْنِ تَذُودَانِ قَالَ مَا خَطْبُكُمَا قَالَتَا لَا نَسْقِي حَتَّى يُصْدِرَ الرِّعَاءُ وَأَبُونَا شَيْخٌ كَبِيرٌ * فَسَقَى لَهُمَا ثُمَّ تَوَلَّى إِلَى الظِّلِّ فَقَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي لِمَا أَنْزَلْتَ إِلَيَّ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَقِيرٌ﴾

“And when he came to the well of Madyan, he found there a crowd of people watering [their flocks], and he found aside from them two women driving back [their flocks]. He said, "What is your circumstance?" They said, 'We do not water until the shepherds dispatch [their flocks]; and our father is an old man.' So he watered [their flocks] for them; then he went back to the shade and said, 'My Lord, indeed I am, for whatever good You would send down to me, in need.'”

Surah Al-Qaṣaṣ: 23-24

Al-Hajāwī said:

2

"فَتَارَ مُوسَى، وَتَحَرَّكَتْ فِيهِ عَوَائِلُ الشَّهَامَةِ وَالرُّجُولَةِ، وَسَقَى لَهُمَا، وَأَدْلَى بِدَلْوِهِ بَيْنَ دَلَاءِ الرِّجَالِ حَتَّى شَرِبَتْ مَا شِئْتُهُمَا"

“Mūsā was moved, and the elements of chivalry and manhood stirred within him - and he provided water for them, and he lowered his bucket among the buckets of the men until their flock had been watered.”

These qualities all come together in something called shahāmah - being astute and enduring. Perhaps this is close in meaning to the word 'chivalry' - the qualities of the man who rides a horse - a knight or a warrior. In addition to leadership, patience, justice and readiness to help the weak, we can also add honour and dignity.

Honour and Dignity

Chapter Twelve

Al-'Izz - honour is the opposite of humiliation. The original meaning returns back to strength, might and power.

This attribute needs to be understood correctly. An extremism that people may fall in to is that they think this is to be an unrestricted quality of a man. That they are so strong and powerful that they become oppressive and lack consideration. This is not what Islām promotes as honour.

Allāh ﷻ said:

1

﴿يَقُولُونَ لئن رَجَعْنَا إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ لَيُخْرِجَنَّ الْأَعَزُّ مِنْهَا الْأَذَلَّ ۚ وَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَكِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

“They say, ‘If we return to Madinah, the honourable will definitely expel the inferior.’ But all honour and power belongs to Allāh, His Messenger, and the believers, yet the hypocrites do not know.”

Surah Al-Munāfiqūn: 8

They were talking about the Prophet ﷺ negatively. Therefore, Allāh informed them that honour belongs to Allāh, His Messenger and the believers. All honour belong to Allāh – al-‘Azīz. Also, Allāh is the most-Wise – al-Hakīm, and He loves for the believers to have honour. This honour and dignity and honour has to be within the framework of Islām.

Allāh ﷻ described this in the Qur’ān:

2

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ أَذِلَّةٌ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٌ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ ۚ ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۚ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾

“O you who have believed, whoever of you should revert from his religion - Allāh will bring forth [in place of them] a people He will love and who will love Him [who are] humble toward the believers, powerful against the disbelievers; they strive in the cause of Allāh and do not fear the blame of a critic. That is the favour of Allāh; He bestows it upon whom He wills. And Allāh is all-Encompassing and Knowing.”

Surah Al-Mā'idah: 54

3

﴿مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْعِزَّةَ فَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ جَمِيعًا ۚ إِلَيْهِ يَصْعَدُ الْكَلِمُ الطَّيِّبُ وَالْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ يَرْفَعُهُ ۚ وَالَّذِينَ يَمْكُرُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ ۖ وَمَكْرُ أُولَئِكَ هُوَ يَبُورُ﴾

“Whoever desires honour [through power] - then to Allāh belongs all honour. To Him ascends good speech, and righteous work raises it. But they who plot evil deeds will have a severe punishment, and the plotting of those - it will perish.”

Surah Fātir: 10

‘Umar رضي الله عنه said:

4

"نحن قوم أعزّنا الله بالإسلام فمهما ابتغينا العزّة في غيره أذلّنا الله"

“We are a people who were honoured by Allāh through Islām. So whenever we seek honour in something else; Allāh will disgrace us.”

We are a people that are given honour through Islām. This demonstrates that honour is not as people think of it; unrestricted might and power. In the light of Islām, might and power is to be directed to the enemies of Allāh and softness is directed towards the beloved of Allāh. This is all part of the nuanced Islamic framework. It is not this hyper-masculinity that one has to show ‘Izzah even if they have to destroy other people’s lives.

Rather, ‘Izzah through Islām is balanced and does not have oppression.

Presence



Chapter Thirteen

We will now discuss a characteristic known in the Arabic language as al-Haybah – presence. It is difficult to explain exactly what is meant because could have some negative connotations which may be attached to it, for example; pride and arrogance.

The famous poet – Ibn Shaddād said:

أَنَا الْعَبْدُ الَّذِي خُبِّرْتَ عَنْهُ وَقَدْ عَايَنْتَنِي فَدَعِ السَّمَاعَا

وَلَوْ أَرْسَلْتُ رُمْحِي مَعَ جَبَانٍ لَكَانَ بِهَيْبَتِي يَلْقَى السِّبَاعَا

I am the slave that you have been informed about

...

and now that you have seen me leave off that which you heard

And if I sent my spear with a coward

...

just from my Haybah, he would kill the beast of prey

Therefore, it can be seen with a degree of arrogance. However, the concept of Haybah – presence also has positive examples and its importance in the religion of Islām

The best way to illustrate this is through a narration in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī of Sa'd Ibn Abī Waqqās:

1

"قَالَ اسْتَأْذَنَ عُمَرُ بْنُ الْخَطَّابِ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، وَعِنْدَهُ نِسْوَةٌ مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ يُكَلِّمْنَهُ وَيَسْتَكْثِرْنَ، عَالِيَةً أَصَوَاتُهُنَّ عَلَى صَوْتِهِ فَلَمَّا اسْتَأْذَنَ عُمَرُ بْنُ الْخَطَّابِ قُمْنَ فَبَادَرْنَ الْحِجَابَ فَأَذِنَ لَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَدَخَلَ عُمَرُ وَرَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَضْحَكُ، فَقَالَ عُمَرُ أَضْحَكَ اللَّهُ سِنَّكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ. فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: عَجِبْتُ مِنْ هَؤُلَاءِ اللَّائِي كُنَّ عِنْدِي فَلَمَّا سَمِعْنَ صَوْتَكَ ابْتَدَرْنَ الْحِجَابَ. فَقَالَ عُمَرُ فَأَنْتَ أَحَقُّ أَنْ يَهْبَنَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ. ثُمَّ قَالَ عُمَرُ يَا عَدَوَاتِ أَنْفُسِهِنَّ، أَتَهَبْنِي وَلَا تَهَبْنَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقُلْنَ نَعَمْ، أَنْتَ أَقْظُ وَأَغْلَظُ مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: إِيهَا يَا ابْنَ الْخَطَّابِ وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ مَا لَقَيْكَ الشَّيْطَانُ سَالِكًا فَجًّا قَطُّ إِلَّا سَلَكَ فَجًّا غَيْرَ فَجِّكَ."

“Umar bin Al-Khattab asked the permission of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) to see him while some Quraishi women were sitting with him, talking to him and asking him for more expenses, raising their voices above the voice of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ). When `Umar asked for the permission to enter, the women quickly put on their veils. Allāh's Apostle allowed him to enter and `Umar came in while Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) was smiling, `Umar said: O Allāh's Apostle! May Allāh always keep you smiling. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, ‘These women who have been here, roused my wonder, for as soon as they heard your voice, they quickly put on their veils. “`Umar said, "O Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ)! You have more right to be feared by them than I." Then `Umar addressed the women saying, "O enemies of yourselves! You fear me more than you do Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) ?" They said, "Yes, for you are harsher and sterner than Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ)." Then Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "O Ibn Al-Khattab! By Him in Whose Hands my life is! Never does Satan find you going on a way, but he takes another way other than yours.”

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī

In this day and age, for some of our young boys everything is a joke. This opposes the concept of masculinity as it goes against Haybah. An example the scholars give for Haybah is the Haybah a Sheikh has when they sit to teach the student. The students are silent and they do not dare to laugh or joke in the teacher's presence. When this Haybah is lost then the teacher-student relationship becomes a friend-friend relationship.

Therefore, it is important to have balance. As we mentioned, arrogance can enter Haybah. This is when one acts like a tyrant and people are fearful of them – not due to a religious reason; like 'Umar, but because they are tyrannical and evil. The correct Haybah is that which is built from the Taqwa of Allāh. This has to be balanced with other characteristics that we will discuss. One should never understand from the biography of 'Umar Ibn al-Khattāb (رضي الله عنه) that he was overly harsh or he did not care about people. 'Umar had a great deal of care and kindness but he still had that presence that when he was walking down the road the Shaytān takes a different way. This is the Haybah that is built over time through; īmān, commanding the good, forbidding the evil, and with age.

Loyalty

Chapter Fourteen

Allāh ﷻ said:

1

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ فَمَنْ نَكَثَ فَإِنَّمَا يَنْكُثُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ أَوْفَى بِمَا عَاهَدَ عَلَيْهِ اللَّهُ فَمِىٔ زِيَادَةِ أَجْرٍ عَظِيمًا﴾

“Indeed, those who pledge allegiance to you, [O Muḥammad] - they are actually pledging allegiance to Allāh. The hand of Allāh is over their hands. So he who breaks his word only breaks it to the detriment of himself. And he who fulfils that which he has promised Allāh - He will give him a great reward.”

Surah Al-Fath: 10

Let us picture this, the people would pledge; the men would put their hand in the hand of the Messenger, whilst the women would give their pledge without putting their hand. They would pledge to be loyal and they would fulfill their oath and agreement. They would not go back on their covenant. They made several pledges, for example; the pledge of Ridwān:

2

﴿لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ فَعَلِمَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَثَابَهُمْ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا﴾

“Certainly was Allāh pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, [O Muḥammad], under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquillity upon them and rewarded them with an imminent conquest.”

Surah Al-Fath: 18

Therefore, this concept of loyalty is a quality of a real man. When they pledged their loyalty to Allāh, His Messenger and to the believers then their word is worth something and their loyalty is unwavering and unbroken.

Hassān Ibn Thābit – the poet of the Messenger – has some amazing lines of poetry, he said:

وَلَكِنْ فِي الْبَلَاءِ هُمْ قَلِيلٌ

...

أَخِلَاءُ الرِّخَاءِ هُمْ كَثِيرٌ

فَمَا لَكَ عِنْدَ نَائِبَةِ خَلِيلٍ

...

فَلَا يَغُرُّكَ خُلَّةٌ مِّنْ تَوَاحِي

وَلَكِنْ لَيْسَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يَقُولُ

...

وَكُلُّ أَخٍ يَقُولُ أَنَا وَفِي

فَذَاكَ لِمَا يَقُولُ هُوَ الْفَعُولُ

...

سِوَى خِلٍّ لَهُ حَسَبٌ وَدِينٌ

The friends at times of ease are many
but when it comes to the time of troubles there are few
So do not be deceived by the friendship of the one that you take as a brother
for when disaster strikes you won't find any of those people to be close friends
And every brother who says: I am loyal to you
but he does not do what he says
Except for a loyal companion of good character [from lineage] and religion
then this is the one who will do as they say

In this poetry, he mentions that pledges of loyalty are cheap and many people will do this. However, when the situation becomes tough and disaster strikes one will not want to be their friend.

Ultimately, if there is a person with two characteristics:

[1] a good lineage through which they have inherited good etiquettes and manners

[2] religiosity

This is the person that will be loyal and will fulfill their pledge.

We need to understand that loyalty is firstly to Allāh, His Messenger and to the believers. This is the concept that we have called al-Walā wal-Barā'; our association is to Allāh, His Messenger and the believers whilst we dissociate from the disbelievers. Rather, we are kind and polite to them because they have not fought against us and driven us out of our homes.

The characteristic of a real man is that they look out for people. They give a pledge to someone and they fulfill that oath. A real man's word and promise is valuable.

Allāh ﷻ said:

3

﴿مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ رِجَالٌ صَدَقُوا مَا عَاهَدُوا اللَّهَ عَلَيْهِ فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ قَضَىٰ نَحْبَهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَنْتَظِرُ ۚ وَمَا بَدَّلُوا تَبْدِيلًا﴾

“Among the believers are men true to what they promised Allāh. Among them is he who has fulfilled his vow [to the death], and among them is he who awaits [his chance]. And they did not alter [the terms of their commitment] with any alteration.”

Surah Al-Aḥzāb: 23

Allāh described these people as Rijāl – real men because they made a commitment with Allāh and they never altered the commitment terms. They made a promise to Allāh and they never went back on that promise. They decided that they were going to do something and they are those who fulfilled their vow to their death. They died fulfilling that promise they made to Allāh. This is a sign of a real man.

This is how Allāh described the companions; those of them who died fulfilling their commitments to Allāh. It is said that this was revealed regarding some of the companions who did not take part in the Battle of Badr and they promised Allāh: ‘O Allāh, if you give us another chance’, because the Battle of Badr was not compulsory upon the companions. However, it turned out to be a distinctive battle in the history of Islām that separated the believers from the disbelievers. Those who promised Allāh for another chance fulfilled this during the Battle of Uhud. They stuck to their promises until death. A beautiful concept is that it does not necessarily mean that one will die for it, but their commitment is to the extent that they are willing to die for it. These are from the amazing qualities that one hears about the companions and it is what we should aspire to and resemble.

Allāh ﷻ said:

4

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعِمَّا يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا﴾

“Indeed, Allāh commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice. Excellent is that which Allāh instructs you. Indeed, Allāh is ever Hearing and Seeing.”

Surah Al-Nisā': 58

Allāh commands us to fulfil our trusts to whom they are due. If we have taken a responsibility then Allāh commands us to deliver that responsibility that was given.

This is a sign of a man, that when trusts are taken they are taken seriously. These trusts are many:

5

﴿إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا﴾

“Indeed, We offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and they declined to bear it and feared it; but man [undertook to] bear it. Indeed, he was unjust and ignorant.”

Surah Al-Aḥzāb: 72

Indeed, Allāh offered the Trust to the heavens, the earth and the mountains but they were all fearful and declined it. All these vast creations of Allāh could not carry the weight of this Trust. The question then arises, where are the men who are going to carry this weight on their shoulders? Mankind took it on board, and they are in a stake of extreme oppression and ignorance. That is the state of a person if Allāh ﷻ does not guide them to be able to carry this Trust.

In addition, there are trusts that are given by the people, then will entrust a person to keep it safe and return it to them. This is a matter which a person should take seriously. The loss of trust is one of the signs of the Day of Judgement. The Prophet ﷺ mentioned that it will come to a point in time where people will say: go to such and such a city; for indeed there is a single person in that city who is trustworthy.

It is very important that we take our trusts seriously and from these trusts are the women fold in the family; wife, children etc. They are a trust that Allāh has bestowed upon us. Allāh has given us responsibility for them and how we treat them is a sign of how one behaves towards the trusts.

The people of the past, if they were given something as a trust, they would take care of it at all costs. They would go through any hardship upon themselves but they would never want to be known as a man that does not fulfil their responsibilities or a man that is not trustworthy.

Our Messenger was known – even before Prophet hood – as the trustworthy one. The person that one can trust and they will fulfil their promise. Therefore, there is no doubt that this attribute is from the characteristics of manhood.

Also, the story of Mūsā in Madyan, has many attributes of manhood within it.

Allāh ﷻ said:



﴿فَجَاءَتْهُ إِحْدَاهُمَا تَمْشِي عَلَى اسْتِحْيَاءٍ قَالَتْ إِنَّ أَبِي يَدْعُوكَ لِيَجْزِيَكَ أَجْرَ مَا سَقَيْتَ لَنَا فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُ وَقَصَّ عَلَيْهِ الْقَصَصَ قَالَ لَا تَخَفْ نَجَوْتَ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ قَالَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا يَا أَبَتِ اسْتَأْجِرْهُ إِنَّ خَيْرَ مَنِ اسْتَأْجَرْتَ الْقَوِيُّ الْأَمِينُ﴾

“Then one of the two women came to him walking with shyness. She said, ‘Indeed, my father invites you that he may reward you for having watered for us.’ So when he came to him and related to him the story, he said, ‘Fear not. You have escaped from the wrongdoing people. One of the two daughters suggested, ‘O my dear father! Hire him. The best man for employment is definitely the strong and trustworthy ‘one’”

Surah Al-Qasas: 25-26

One of the two women said to her father that the best person to employ is the one who is strong and trustworthy. Look at how she described the perfect man to her father. Therefore, it is not just about strength but it is also about being trustworthy.

Bravery and Courage

Chapter Fifteen

This is the topic that I guess everyone wrote down as a sign of a real man.

Firstly, we need to ask ourselves, what is bravery? Bravery is a quality of the heart. Sometimes the scholars describe it as:

1

"شِدَّةُ الْقَلْبِ عِنْدَ الْبَأْسِ"

"The strength of the heart in times of severity."

Therefore, it is a strength of the heart rather than the body. A person may be physically big with large muscles but their heart is not strong. So when there is a severe situation then their heart is weak and they are the first to collapse or run away.

Also, a part of bravery is what the scholars describe as al-Iqdām – to put oneself forward into danger. That is why some of them described it as:

2

"الإقدام على المكاره، والمهالك، عند الحاجة إلى ذلك"

"To put oneself forward into difficulty or life-threatening situations when there is a need for it."

This is where I want to mention some things which are perceived as bravery, but in reality are recklessness. For example; jumping off a cliff, hanging off the side of a building etc. Some people think they are brave by doing this, but this is not bravery. This is because bravery is putting oneself into a life-threatening situation when there is a need for it. The second aspect is that the person's feet are firm at times of fear; they do not break or quit easily. The third thing is that they do not have absolute fear of death – as is the case with disbelievers – to the extent that they run away from it in every single manner.

When a person amalgamates these three then this is what is considered bravery. This is when one will be willing to give up their life for the sake of the religion or for the sake of their womenfolk. It is with this bravery that one is able to help a neighbour who is being attacked, or assist a person being oppressed etc.

The second aspect; having firm feet at times of fear does not mean that they do not feel fear. The companions were described in a situation wherein they felt fear, as Allāh ﷻ said:

3

﴿وَبَلَغَتِ الْقُلُوبُ الْحَنَاجِرَ﴾

"and hearts reached the throats [out of fear]"

Surah Al-Aḥzāb: 10

However, they stayed resolute and their feet remained firm despite the presence of fear. Therefore, it is learning to live with fear, rather than not having any fear.

It is a misconception to believe that bravery means no fear. Being scared is a human trait, but bravery is to learn to live with fear and cope with it.

Bravery, of course, is something that is hugely praised in almost every culture, every place and every time. Bravery is a trait that is associated with a man and masculinity. However, we need to understand how to develop bravery. We do not develop bravery by putting ourselves into dangerous and life-threatening situations for a joke. The way to develop bravery in Islām is by having brave role-models. One has to look at the Prophets, Companions, Scholars of Islām and great warriors in Islamic history.

Another means to develop bravery is increasing in the fear of Allāh, because the more one fears Allāh, the less one fears other things.

Furthermore, being in situations where one takes themselves to account regarding what they have done and what they could have done better. This is a form of training oneself to be brave.

As the Prophet ﷺ said:

4

"وَمَنْ يَتَصَبَّرْ يُصَبِّرْهُ اللَّهُ"

"And whoever practises patience, Allāh will make him patient"

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī

Also, as we previously mentioned:

5

"إِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ بِالتَّعَلُّمِ، وَإِنَّمَا الْحِلْمُ بِالتَّحَلُّمِ"

"Knowledge comes from learning, and forbearance comes from practising forbearance"

There is no doubt that du'ā is a major factor in the times of fear. Those, who in the times of fear, supplicate and place their trust in Allāh, can achieve things that people could not imagine. One only has to read the biographies of those who came before us, from the; Prophets, Companions and early generations who followed them in goodness. This type of bravery stems from trusting and relying upon Allāh.

A problem that we have is that the world has become cowardly. One may see a person who is afflicted by a small illness and it would be as if this person is facing an army of ten thousand people. People behave in a cowardly manner and are afraid to face difficulty, challenges and danger. The world has become soft as people become used to luxury and comfort. This is why I really believe that one of the major ways we can recover masculinity is to take our young men and let them experience difficult situations which require leadership. When one organises a camping trip it causes a person to have to think about all conceivable options.

Not too long ago, we were camping in the desert island and we were just talking about the fact that people today cannot even manage to go to the toilet outside without their five-star cubicle, running water, soft tissue and everything else provided for them.

They literally can barely survive even a night. How can one go from that to a person who is expected to put themselves in danger for the sake of their religion, for the sake of their family or for the sake of their Community? How can a person possibly go from that?

It is because they have become so surrounded by the worldly-life and have been pampered. The minute this is taken away from them then they literally collapse. Forget danger, they cannot even manage answering the call of nature in a place where there is no bathroom. We have to start encouraging our children to become stronger and to become capable of making decisions in challenging situations. This will allow them to handle situations wherein bravery is required. It is also important to surround them with good friends.

6

"الرَّجُلُ عَلَى دِينِ خَلِيلِهِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ أَحَدُكُمْ مَنْ يُخَالِلُ"

"A man is upon the religion of his best friend, so let one of you look at whom he befriends"

If ones close friend is brave then these noble characteristic will also develop in the person. Look at how the Prophet ﷺ developed these characteristics within the Companions, to the extent where the young companions were asking to partake in the Battle of Badr. They were raised in a community of bravery, leadership and independence with the reliance upon Allāh.

Ultimately, we have to give the young people a chance to take some measured risk to learn to handle risks that exist in life and to learn to have those characteristics to be able to deal with them.

Allāh ﷻ said to the Prophet ﷺ:

7

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ حَرِّضِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَى الْقِتَالِ إِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ عِشْرُونَ صَابِرُونَ يَغْلِبُوا مِائَتَيْنِ وَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ مِائَةٌ يَغْلِبُوا أَلْفًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ﴾

"O Prophet! Motivate the believers to fight. If there are twenty steadfast among you, they will overcome two hundred. And if there are one hundred of you, they will overcome one thousand of the disbelievers, for they are a people who do not comprehend."

Surah Al-Anfāl: 65

Allāh ﷻ then said:

8

﴿الْآنَ خَفَّفَ اللَّهُ عَنْكُمْ وَعَلِمَ أَنَّ فِيكُمْ ضَعْفًا﴾

"Now Allāh has lightened your burden, for He knows that there is weakness in you."

Surah Al-Anfāl: 66

Look at how they were in the early days. Twenty strong men would face two hundred and they would not shake in fear, their feet would be firm and they would be willing to sacrifice themselves for their religion, family and community.

We need to ultimately develop this, and this came from the encouragement of the Prophet ﷺ and this is what we need to do in this time. It is important to have balance, as Allāh ﷻ said:

9

﴿وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ﴾

“but do not exceed the limits. Allāh does not like transgressors.”

Surah Al-Baqarah: 190

It is important to stick within the limits of Islām, otherwise it can lead to extreme behaviour. People performing actions which they believe to be brave but in reality are foolish. Knowledge and religiosity has to come with these characteristics.

Allāh ﷻ said:

10

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا لَقِيتُمْ فِئَةً فَاثْبُتُوا وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلَحُونَ﴾

“O believers! When you face an enemy, stand firm and remember Allāh often so you may triumph.”

Surah Al-Anfāl: 45

Allāh ﷻ has taught us to develop bravery through remembering Allāh, keeping our feet firm and not turning away. This will lead to success.

It was narrated from some of the Companions that they said:

11

"بايعنا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم على السمع والطاعة، في العسر واليسر، والمنشط والمكره، وعلى أثرة علينا، وعلى أن لا ننازع الأمر أهله، وعلى أن نقول بالحق أينما كنا، لا نخاف في الله لومة لائم"

“We swore allegiance to Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) to hear and obey; in time of difficulty and in prosperity, in hardship and in ease, to endure being discriminated against and not to dispute about rule with those in power, except in case of evident infidelity regarding which there is a proof from Allāh. We swore allegiance to Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) to say what was right wherever we were, and not to fear from anyone's reproach.”

They pledged that they will not fear the blame of the blamers. This all brings the concept of bravery in Islām.

Gentleness and Kindness

Chapter Sixteen

The Prophet ﷺ was incredibly caring about his followers, and concerned about them going through difficulty:

1 ﴿لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُم بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ﴾

“There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; [he is] concerned over you and to the believers is kind and merciful.”

Surah Al-Tawbah: 128

This is one of the things that I really want you to take from this course and I hope you will take from, is the balance of characteristics. Yes, we talked about strength, Haybah, authority, leadership, bravery and courage. We also talked about kindness, softens and gentleness. That is why when one looks at the pre-Islamic poetry; bravery and courage for example, the poetry of Ibn Shaddād, is that it would usually connect bravery to battles, overcoming the enemy, reputation and the fear that people had of that person. Islām came to refine those characteristics and also to balance them.

An example of refining is that bravery is not just throwing oneself into destruction:

2 ﴿وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ﴾

“and do not let your own hands throw you into destruction.”

Surah Al-Baqarah: 195

Balancing these characteristics with softness, kindness and gentleness. As Allāh ﷻ said:

3 ﴿فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ ۚ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ ۚ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ ۚ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ﴾

“So by mercy from Allāh, you were lenient with them. And if you had been harsh and hard-hearted, they would have disbanded from about you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult them in the matter. And when you have decided, then rely upon Allāh. Indeed, Allāh loves those who rely [upon Him].”

Surah Āl-'Imrān: 159

In this verse, look at how the Prophet ﷺ is told that it is by the mercy of Allāh that he was someone gentle, like the one whom the Prophet ﷺ said about:

4 "عَلَى كُلِّ قَرِيبٍ هَيِّنٍ لِّينٍ سَهْلٍ"

“For every person who is near [to people], amicable, and easy [to deal with].”

Gentleness, approachability, tolerance and forgiving are characteristics which are encouraged for men. The perception that it is all about strength and bravery is incorrect and it has to be balanced with the aforementioned characteristics.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

5

"إِنَّ الرِّفْقَ لَا يَكُونُ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا زَانَهُ وَلَا يُنْزَعُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا شَانَهُ"

"Gentleness was found in anything except that it made it beautiful, and it was never taken away from anything except that it made it ugly"

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim

Gentleness makes everything beautiful and when it is removed it becomes ugly.

Look at how the Prophet ﷺ encouraged us to be gentle and kind. The Prophet ﷺ specifically mentioned this as a characteristic that men should have towards women, when the Prophet ﷺ said:

6

"رُؤْيَدَكَ يَا أَنْجَشَهُ سَوْقَكَ بِالْقَوَارِيرِ"

"Be gentle, O Anjashah, when driving [camels] carrying [women]."

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī

The Prophet ﷺ is telling him to be gentle when it comes to the women-fold. Do not be rough, tough and harsh. These are characteristics of a real man; they have the ability to be brave, strong, stand up for the truth whilst also being soft, gentle, caring and kind.

Generosity and Nobility



Chapter Seventeen

The meaning of generosity is to give easily without resentment. This was something praised among the Arabs:

1

"وقيل سأل رجل حاتمًا الطائي فقال: يا حاتم هل غلبك أحدٌ في الكرم؟ قال: نعم، غلام يتيم من طيء، نزلت بفنائه وكان له عشرة رؤوس من الغنم، فعمد إلى رأس منها فذبحه. وأصلح من لحمه، وقدم إليّ، وكان فيما قدّم إليّ الدماغ، فتناولت منه فاستطبتّه، فقلت: طيبٌ والله. فخرج من بين يدي، وجعل يذبح رأسًا رأسًا، ويقدم إليّ الدماغ وأنا لا أعلم. فلما خرجت لأرحل نظرت حول بيته دماءً عظيمًا، وإذا هو قد ذبح الغنم بأسره. فقلت له: لم فعلت ذلك؟ فقال: يا سبحان الله! تستطيب شيئًا أملكه فأبخل عليك به، إنّ ذلك لسبّة على العرب قبيحة. قيل يا حاتم: فما الذي عوّضته؟ قال: ثلاثمائة ناقة حمراء وخمسمائة رأس من الغنم، ف قيل أنت إذا أكرم منه، فقال: بل هو أكرم، لأنّه جاد بكلّ ما يملكه، وإنّما جُدت بقليل من كثير"

“A questioner asked Hātim al-Tā’ī: O Hātim has there even been someone more generous than you? He said: Yes, an orphan boy from Tay, this boy had ten sheep. He sacrificed one of the sheep, prepared the food and offered it. I said [to the boy]: By Allāh! This is very nice. He left in front of me and sacrificed all his sheep and presented to me the brain – whilst I did not know. When I went out to leave, I noticed around his house a lot of blood, this was because he had sacrificed all his sheep. I said to him: Why did you do this? He said: O Subhān Allāh! You enjoyed something I own, am I then too stingy to give it to you, this is something which the Arabs cannot tolerate. It was said: O Hātim, what did you give him in exchange? He said: Three hundred red camels and five hundred sheeps. It was said: Then you are more generous than him. He responded: Rather, he is more generous, because he gave whatever he owned, and I only gave little from a lot”

This is a story from pre-Islamic times regarding the generosity of the Arabs. This boy only owned ten sheep’s and he sacrificed all of them because he noticed that his neighbour enjoyed them. This is the essence of generosity.

The word Karam has also be used to describe those who behave in a noble manner. Those who have noble manners, characteristics and etiquettes. These come together in the statement of Allāh ﷻ:

2

﴿هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ ضَيْفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ إِذْ دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ فَقَالُوا سَلَامًا قَالَ سَلَامٌ قَوْمٌ مُنْكَرُونَ فَرَأَىٰ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ فَجَاءَ بِعِجْلٍ سَمِينٍ﴾

“Has the story of Abraham’s honoured guests reached you. ‘Remember’ when they entered his presence and greeted ‘him with’: Peace! He replied: Peace ‘be upon you’! ‘Then he said to himself’: ‘These are’ an unfamiliar people. Then he slipped off to his family and brought a fat ‘roasted’ calf”

Surah Al-Dhāriyāt: 26

Ibrāhīm honoured the guests and showed them generosity. He brought a whole calf and roasted it for them. This is just an example of the generosity of the Prophets. As we mentioned, it is to be able to give without resentment. It is not like the one who finds difficulty in giving.

As Allāh ﷻ said:

3

﴿لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ﴾

“You will never achieve righteousness until you donate some of what you cherish.”

Surah Āl-‘Imrān: 92

There are many stories amongst the Companions and earlier generation which demonstrate how they would give away the things they love the most. They would always give from the best of what they own. Some of them would go around giving sugar – because they loved it, and when asked why they do it, they would say:

4

﴿لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ﴾

“You will never achieve righteousness until you donate some of what you cherish.”

Surah Āl-‘Imrān: 92

Therefore, Karam is a type of giving without any resentment or feeling bad. Ultimately, this is something that can be developed and learnt from the people one surrounds themselves with. One has to have the right role models who carry this trait of generosity. This is something that has been associated with pre-Islamic masculinity and manhood. A real man was known for their Karam as they were known for their bravery and strength. They would be generous to their guests, always invite them, cook for them and give to them.

Allāh ﷻ said:

5

﴿الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ﴾

“Those who spend their wealth in charity day and night, secretly and openly—their reward is with their Lord, and there will be no fear for them, nor will they grieve.”

Surah Al-Baqarah: 274

It was said about the generosity of the Prophet ﷺ:

6

"ما سُئِلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَلَى الْإِسْلَامِ شَيْئًا إِلَّا أَعْطَاهُ، قَالَ: فَجَاءَهُ رَجُلٌ فَأَعْطَاهُ غَنَمًا بَيْنَ جَبَلَيْنِ، فَرَجَعَ إِلَى قَوْمِهِ، فَقَالَ: يَا قَوْمِ أَسْلَمُوا، فَإِنَّ مُحَمَّدًا يُعْطِي عَطَاءً لَا يَخْشَى الْفَاقَةَ"

“It never happened that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) was asked anything for the sake of Islam and he did not give that. There came to him a person and he gave him a large flock [of sheep and goats] and he went back to his people and said: My people, embrace Islam, for Muhammad gives so much charity as if he has no fear of poverty.”

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim

This was a reason for people to become Muslim. The Prophet ﷺ would give people – without and fear of being poor. He would give for the sake of Allāh and those people accepted Islām.

An example of generosity from the Companions is ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb رضي الله عنه who said:

7

"أمرنا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أن نتصدق، فوافق ذلك عندي مالا، فقلت: اليوم أسبق أبا بكرٍ إن سبقته يومًا، قال: فجئت بنصف مالي، فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: ما أبقيت لأهلك؟ قلت: مثله، وأتى أبو بكرٍ بكل ما عنده، فقال: يا أبا بكرٍ ما أبقيت لأهلك؟ قال: أبقيت لهم الله ورسوله، قلت: لا أسبقه إلى شيءٍ أبدًا"

"The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) commanded us one day to give sadaqah. At that time I had some property. I said: Today I shall surpass Abū Bakr if I surpass him any day. I, therefore, brought half my property. The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) asked: What did you leave for your family? I replied: The same amount. Abū Bakr brought all that he had with him. The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) asked him: What did you leave for your family? He replied: I left Allāh and His Apostle for them. I said: I shall never compete with you in anything."

Sunan Abī Dāwūd

Reflect over the generosity of these noble companions. ‘Umar gave half of everything he had and Abū Bakr gave everything. These men had this attribute of generosity.

Preferring Others

Chapter Eighteen

This is the characteristic of putting others ahead of oneself.

Allāh ﷻ said:

1 ﴿وَالَّذِينَ تَبَوَّؤُوا الدَّارَ وَالْإِيمَانَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِّمَّا أُوتُوا وَيُؤْثِرُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ وَمَنْ يُوقِ شَخِّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ﴾

“As for those who had settled in the city and ‘embraced’ the faith before ‘the arrival of’ the emigrants, they love whoever immigrates to them, never having a desire in their hearts for whatever ‘of the gains’ is given to the emigrants. They give ‘the emigrants’ preference over themselves even though they may be in need. And whoever is saved from the selfishness of their own souls, it is they who are ‘truly’ successful.”

Surah Al-Hashr: 9

Allāh ﷻ mentions those people who were in Madīnah before the Hijrah. When the people emigrated to them they did so much to look after and take care of them. They gave up what they owned to others.

Al-Īthār is when one places the needs of others in front of themselves – even if it harms themselves. There are some amazing stories of this among the Companions. Zubayr رضى الله عنه mentions the story of Talha رضى الله عنه - on the Day of Uhud – that he was protecting the Prophet ﷺ with his own body, and was placing his own hands in front of arrows which were being targeted at the Prophet ﷺ; until his fingers became paralysed. He was then shot in the head and the Prophet ﷺ carried him upon his back. The Prophet ﷺ said that paradise is a must for Talha. Talha gave up his hand for the Messenger of Allāh ﷻ.

Another example was is that of Abū Talha al-Ansārī رضى الله عنه . Anas رضى الله عنه said, that on the Day of Uhud, the people fled from the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ whilst Abū Talha was standing in front of him. Whenever the Prophet ﷺ would look up and an arrow was fired towards him, Abū Talha would put himself in front of it to protect the Prophet ﷺ. He would say:

2 "نحري دون نحره"
“My neck before your neck.”

This shows that he would put himself forward, so if the arrow hit anyone it would hit him before the Prophet ﷺ. He put his life in danger for the Prophet ﷺ. This is preferring others over oneself.

Courtesy



Chapter Nineteen

From the characteristics which we need to discuss is what is known as Murū'ah; sometimes it is called Kamāl al-Rujūlah – the complete characteristics that a man should have. In this chapter, I have called it courtesy as that is the essence of it. It is behaviour which takes into account the situation and circumstances in the best possible way. This leads to nothing unseemly occurs from the person and people have nothing negative to say about them.

It is also said that Murū'ah is to carefully guard and leave off anything permissible which could lead them to become blameworthy or lowered in the sight of the people.

Some also say that Murū'ah is to have an excellent standard of manners and a beautiful set of habits.

Allāh ﷻ commanded people to have these kind of excellent courteous manners:

1

﴿خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ﴾

“Be gracious, enjoin what is right, and turn away from those who act ignorantly.”

Surah Al-A'rāf: 199

2

"قيل لسفيان بن عيينة: (قد استنبطت من القرآن كل شيء، فهل وجدت المروءة فيه؟ فقال: نعم، في قوله تعالى: خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ،"

“It was said to Sufyān Ibn ‘Uyaynah: Everything can be extracted from the Qur’ān, do we find Murū'ah in it? He said: Yes, in the statement of Allāh: Be gracious, enjoin what is right, and turn away from those who act ignorantly”

It is extremely important to note that these courteous manners can go outside of what is Islamically considered to be good or bad, as it also considers what people consider bad. For example, covering the head in many places is considered part of Murū'ah; this was certainly in the time of the Prophet ﷺ and in many places today. In many Arab countries, for example, a man is never seen outside without wearing a head covering. This used to be present in the time of the Prophet ﷺ. This may not be something Islamic, but it is part of the people's expectations.

Therefore, it is part of masculinity and manhood to meet the expectations of the people, as long as it does not contradict Islām. This comes under the command of Allāh:

3

﴿خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ﴾

“Be gracious, enjoin what is right, and turn away from those who act ignorantly.”

Surah Al-A'rāf: 199

Also, Allāh ﷻ said:

4

﴿وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا﴾

“The ‘true’ servants of the Most Compassionate are those who walk on the earth humbly, and when the foolish address them ‘improperly’, they only respond with peace.”

Surah Al-Furqān: 63

This is from courteous behaviour towards others.

Shyness

Chapter Twenty

From the characteristics which provide balance to strength and bravery is shyness.

Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī رضي الله عنه said:

1

"كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَشَدَّ حَيَاءً مِنَ الْعَذْرَاءِ فِي خَدْرِهَا وَكَانَ إِذَا كَرِهَ شَيْئًا عَرَفْنَاهُ فِي وَجْهِهِ"

“The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ had more shyness than a virgin girl in her private room. If he disliked something, we knew it from his face.”

Even though the Prophet ﷺ was known for his; strength, bravery and presence. He was also known for being incredibly shy.

It is a misconception to think that shyness is not part of masculinity and is only an attribute that women should possess. The Prophet ﷺ was more shy than even the shyest women.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

2

"الْحَيَاءُ خَيْرٌ كُلُّهُ"

“Shyness is always good”

It has been narrated by ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه :

3

"أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، مَرَّ عَلَى رَجُلٍ، وَهُوَ يِعَاتِبُ أَخَاهُ فِي الْحَيَاءِ، يَقُولُ: إِنَّكَ لَتَسْتَحْيِي حَتَّى كَأَنَّهُ يَقُولُ: قَدْ أَضَرَّ بِكَ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: ((دَعِهِ، فَإِنَّ الْحَيَاءَ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ))"

“Once Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) passed by an Ansārī who was admonishing his brother regarding shyness. On that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said: Leave him as shyness is a part of faith.”

Protective Jealousy

Chapter Twenty-one

From the characteristics we have to mention when we are talking about manliness is protective jealousy.

Sa'd Ibn 'Ubādah رضي الله عنه said:

1

"لَوْ رَأَيْتُ رَجُلًا مَعَ امْرَأَتِي لَضَرَبْتُهُ بِالسَّيْفِ غَيْرَ مُصْفِحٍ عَنْهُ . فَبَلَغَ ذَلِكَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ «أَتَعْجَبُونَ مِنْ غَيْرَةٍ سَعَدِ فَوَاللَّهِ لَأَنَا أَغَيْرُ مِنْهُ وَاللَّهِ أَغَيْرُ مِنِّي مِنْ أَجْلِ غَيْرَةِ اللَّهِ حَرَّمَ الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ وَلَا شَخْصَ أَغَيْرُ مِنَ اللَّهِ..."

"If I were to see a man with my wife, I would have struck him with the sword, and not with the flat part of it. When Allāh's Messenger ﷺ heard of that, he said: 'Are you surprised at Sa'd's protective jealousy? By Allāh, I am more jealous of my honour than he, and Allāh is more jealous than I. Because of His jealousy, Allāh has prohibited indecency, both open and secret And no person is more jealous of his honour than Allāh..."

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim

The Prophet ﷺ praised this protective jealousy. This is not the jealousy of suspicion or the jealousy when someone wants another person to lose the good they have. Islām has nothing to do with this form of jealousy.

Protective jealousy is having this feeling of protectiveness, for example; a man over his wife or over that which is impermissible etc. This is why the Prophet ﷺ stated that he has more protective jealousy than Sa'd and that Allāh has more protective jealousy than him as Allāh has prohibited all kinds of indecency. This means that Allāh ﷻ has prohibited all kinds of indecency and immoralities.

A current threat in this time is when people do not see anything wrong with their wife going out without Hijāb, or she interacts with other men openly and a man doesn't feel anything inside himself. This person does not feel anything wrong about it. In fact, we see from non-muslims and even some of the Muslims that they parade their wives in public while they are dressed in the most inappropriate clothing. This is not a man. This is a Dayūth; which is a despicable example of a human being. A man has to have the feeling of protective jealousy like Sa'd had.

It is narrated about 'Umar رضي الله عنه that when the Prophet ﷺ saw his palace in Paradise, he did not go inside because he remembered the protective jealousy of 'Umar. 'Umar became upset and said: Is it you that I have protective jealousy towards O Messenger of Allāh? He became upset that the Prophet was shy to go in to his palace.

This is a feeling that a man should have. It is not about oppressing family members or being tyrannical over them. Rather, one has so much care for them that they desire to protect them. One cannot tolerate any kind of indecency or immorality from them.

Deeds Matching Words

Chapter Twenty-two

Allāh ﷻ said:

1

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ * كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ﴾
“O you who believe, why do you say that which you do not do? * Most hateful it is with Allāh that you say that which you do not do.”
Surah Al-Saff: 2-3

It has become a habit for people to talk more than they do which is a big problem. This is why a lot of people blamed poets for being those who are quick to talk but slow to actually do what they claimed.

Allāh ﷻ said:

2

﴿وَالشُّعْرَاءُ يَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْغَاوُونَ * أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّهُمْ فِي كُلِّ وَادٍ يَهِيمُونَ * وَأَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ مَا لَا يَفْعَلُونَ * إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَانْتَصَرُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا ظَلَمُوا ۗ وَسَيَعْلَمُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَيَّ مُنْقَلَبٍ يَنْقَلِبُونَ﴾
“And the poets - [only] the deviators follow them; * Do you not see that in every valley they roam * And that they say what they do not do? - * Except those [poets] who believe and do righteous deeds and remember Allāh often and defend [the Muslims] after they were wronged. And those who have wronged are going to know to what [kind of] return they will be returned”
Surah Al-Shu'arā: 224-227

There were some poets who got themselves into trouble because of what they composed:

الْخَيْلُ وَاللَّيْلُ وَالْبِيدَاءُ تَعْرِفُنِي ••• وَالسَّيْفُ وَالرَّمْحُ وَالْقِرطاسُ وَالْقَلَمُ

The horses, night and open desert know me
the sword, spear, Qirat and the pen

This is him boasting that he is amazing with the sword, spear, pen and so on. Due to this, at the end, some of the poets lost their lives because their enemies came to them and said: are you not the master of the sword and spear? Ultimately, there was a lot of talk and no action.

There are some exception, for example; ‘Antarah Ibn Shiddād who was well-known for being a great warrior.

3

﴿وَالشُّعْرَاءُ يَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْغَاوُونَ * أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّهُمْ فِي كُلِّ وَادٍ يَهِيمُونَ * وَأَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ مَا لَا يَفْعَلُونَ * إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَانْتَصَرُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا ظَلَمُوا ۗ وَسَيَعْلَمُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَيَّ مُنْقَلَبٍ يَنْقَلِبُونَ﴾
“And the poets - [only] the deviators follow them; * Do you not see that in every valley they roam * And that they say what they do not do? - * Except those [poets] who believe and do righteous deeds and remember Allāh often and defend [the Muslims] after they were wronged. And those who have wronged are going to know to what [kind of] return they will be returned”
Surah Al-Shu'arā: 224-227

This emphasis to us that if we want to be real men then our actions have to be louder than our words. We have to be people that do not speak much but do a lot. We have to train ourselves and those around us in this manner. Be people who achieve rather than those who talk about their achievements.

Appearing Distinct From Women



Chapter Twenty-three

One of the most important characteristics that makes a real man is being distinct from women. A man has to be a man and that is why Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه said:

1 "لَعَنَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الْمُتَشَبِّهِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ بِالنِّسَاءِ، وَالْمُتَشَبِّهَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ بِالرِّجَالِ."

“Allāh’s Messenger cursed the men that resembled women and the women that resembled men”

In this time, there are two extremes; hyper masculinity and those who are trying to erase the concept of masculinity. This can include the dress of a man; having a beard – which is what Allāh adorned a man with as ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها said. Also, to keep the clothes above the garment. The way a man behaves has to be distinct from the woman. The Prophet ﷺ cursed the men who resemble women and vice versa, sadly, this is the direction that our society is moving in. This mixing occurs to the extent that there is no gender distinction; the genders become fluid and people can be whatever gender they feel like. Islām brought masculinity for men and femininity for women. The two are different; and there is immense good in both.

In conclusion, one can see the balance in the concept of masculinity. The fact that alongside strength, bravery and justice, there is kindness, gentleness and softness.

Conclusion

Chapter Twenty-four

How can we apply and implement this?

1 Knowledge

To implement this it is important to have knowledge.



"خيارهم في الجاهلية خيارهم في الإسلام إذا فقهوا"
"Those who were best in Jahiliyyah are best in Islam, if they have religious understanding"

One should continue having these traits of bravery, strength, honour and dignity. Alongside, having the knowledge of how to use these qualities in Islām. Islām gives us the balance to these qualities and gives us role models; the stories of the Prophets, the life of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the Companions, the biographies of the Scholars, Islamic warriors and so on. This gives us a sense of what we need to achieve and removes us from a corrupt society that we may find ourselves in.

2 Companions

One should surround themselves with people who are interested in developing these above attributes. They are serious regarding the way they behave towards others, their generosity, their justice etc. This has a great impact.

3 Cotton Wool Parenting

We need to stop wrapping up our children too much. We do not want to expose them to unnecessary danger, but if we do not expose them to measured risk then they will not develop the skills to make decisions or demonstrate their independence etc. We need to give them these life experiences, so when it occurs in reality they are trained for it. When one trains hard then one is prepared for the actuality. When we do very little in this regard, then sometimes children can get into gang culture, listening to rapper and musicians etc. This is because they crave the nurturing which provides them masculinity. When they do not find it; they search somewhere else.

Ways in which to do this are to provide them with a wide range of experiences to give them a degree of independence as Allāh ﷻ said:



﴿وَابْتَلُوا الْيَتَامَى﴾
"Test 'the competence of' the orphans"
Surah Al-Nisā': 6

One can give them responsibilities and slowly increase them. Taking them outdoors, for example; away from the city life to a place where they have to find things for themselves. This teaches them life and survival skills like first aid, rescue, swimming etc. These activities develop their character without necessarily being dangerous to a person.

These activities can help develop bravery, courage and strength. There is nothing wrong with, for example, martial arts; but one has to be careful to exclude those matters which are forbidden, like bowing to other people etc.

Another amazing activity is travelling:

2

﴿قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ﴾

“Say, ‘O Prophet’: Travel throughout the land”

Surah Al-‘Ankabūt: 20

When one travels off the beaten track then they get into situations out of the comfort zone. One may be in a situation where they are low on money and become stuck somewhere. In these situations, one has to adapt and learn. These life experiences, that one tries to give to their children in a relatively controlled manner is very important for them. It is as important as the subjects that they learn at school.

We need to ensure that we instill these characteristics because ultimately, when we move away from this we have seen the damage that it is doing to the society. This is what happens when men and women move away from what Allāh ﷻ created them for and the characteristics which he encouraged them to have. This leads to the breakdown of society and loss of honour for everybody.

These are some of the reasons why I wanted to share this course with the people.



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